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SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON'S ARAB HALL.

MRS. LAURA B. STARR.



AR away in the "wilds of Kensington," close to the beautiful and historic Holland House and Park, lived Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy. The house is an unostentatious red brick one, standing back from the street, half hidden by luxurious shade trees, with nothing to differentiate it from its neighbors save a large dome on the west end, which gives promise

of something unusual when one shall have passed the portals of the door.

And the measure of that promise is kept to the fullest extent, for not only something unusual, but something beautiful as a poet's dream greets the eye at every turn. The entrance hall is square, and filled with pictures and statues; beautifully carved antique seats are ranged on three sides; a large picture of the Venetian school confronts the visitor; on either side are figures by Goujon, and a bronze statue of Learus, done by Gilbert expressly for Sir Frederick.

From this hall, or passage, as the English call it, we enter a larger one, which seems to be in about the centre of the house, and is lighted by a skylight. The walls of this room are covered with blue and white tiles, which are thrown into brilliant relief by the dark floor and polished staircase.

A few steps up, where the stairs take a turn, there is a unique arrangement composed of a handsome inlaid cabinet, the inside of which has been taken out and filled in with a mattress and soft cushions, covered with yellowy-green satin, overlaid with heavy embroidery. A stuffed peacock, whose gorgeous plumage tones in admirably with the tile, is secured to one end of the cabinet, and rare rose-jars are on the other. Brazen pots, with growing plants and valuable specimens of Chinese porcelain, stand on a dais underneath. From this vantage-ground we may sit and catch a glimpse of the studio above, the Arab Hall below, and take our time in looking at the rare specimens of old Delft and porcelain scattered about.

The wall above the upper staircase is covered with pictures, and here we notice a portrait of the artist done by Watts; there is a long panel of porcelain covered with Chinese characters which, being interpreted, read "long life," "prosperity," "happiness," and other conventional Eastern good wishes.

The studio, or "work-shop," as Sir Frederick calls it, is an immense room in the rear of the second floor, facing the garden; there is a high, square, projecting window exactly opposite the door, which ends to the right in an alcove or smaller studio, and to the left in a recess with a domed roof. In the wide window-seat, which is as high as a table, are cushions, plaster casts—for Sir Frederick prepares the clay models for all the figures which have appeared in his paintings—unfinished sketches, and rare old curios of all sorts and descriptions.

On a large easel near is a canvas ready for work; on the wall above the door is a cast of the frieze of the Parthenon, and all about the room are sketches of Sir Frederick's, the result of his many tours through the East, for he is very fond of the Orient. Persian jars, majolica bowls, Greek vases, ivory carvings from India, China and Japan, pieces of valuable old faience, and china from various parts of the world are scattered about in artistic confusion.

A door at the end of the studio opens into a little ante-chamber, with cushioned divan, where one may "bide a wee" and look through a screen of Cairene work into the Arab Hall below. This is built in imitation of the harem window, through which the women of the harem look upon their lord and master as he entertains his guests. The walls of this little room are tiled with seventeenth century tile brought from Damascus; the finest pictures owned by Sir Frederick are hung here; the walls are further ornamented by a splendid panel of Japanese lacquer, representing a flight of ducks, and a wonderfully-woven Persian piece done in the fifteenth century.

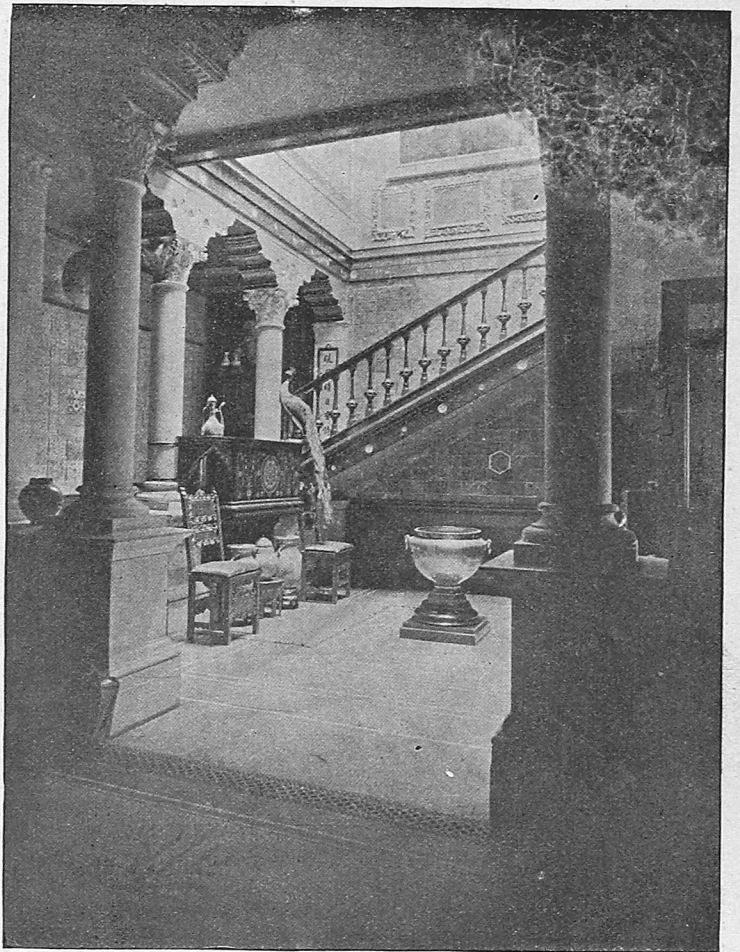
The floors are everywhere covered with the softest of Oriental rugs, blending beautifully with the colors of the draperies, cushions, etc. Koran stands, large and small, hold photographs, papers or sketches, as the exigency of the moment demands. The furniture in the studio is antique, solid mahogany frames, simply carved.

The walls of the square room, through which we pass into the Arab Hall on the lower floor, are covered with blue tile, which look exactly like those in the upper room, but we are told they are only copies of the old lustrous Cairene blue tile, and were made by William De Morman, Esq., who is far and away ahead of any other manufacturer in copying an old glaze or inventing a new one. Some of the old Persian or Damascus tile were broken so that Sir Frederick thought they could not be used, but Mr. De Morman succeeded in repairing them so well only an expert could detect the join.

The roof of the Arab Hall rises into a dome, with eight small arched windows, each filled with colored glass brought from the East, ranged round the base of it. This hall is as nearly a reproduction of the guest-room in an Egyptian house as can be, the only differences being such as were necessitated by the change of climate and mode of life. Sir Frederick was seventeen years collecting the tile, bric-à-brac, and other materials for it.

On three sides are arched recesses, each arch supported by a column of pure white marble on a base of green marble; the capitals of the columns are carved with birds of different kinds. A band of black and white marble runs round the lower part of the wall, blending with the black and white floor tiling.

Directly under the dome, in the centre of the room, is a fountain, where gold fish disport themselves in the running water.



THE LATE SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON'S ARAB HALL.

Above the black marble skirting are Persian tiles of gorgeous design and coloring, the blue merging into green on one hand, and into purple on the other. These tiles all date from the seventeenth century. On the north wall the tile ends in an inscription from the Koran, done in white on a blue ground—"Name of God, be Merciful." On the south

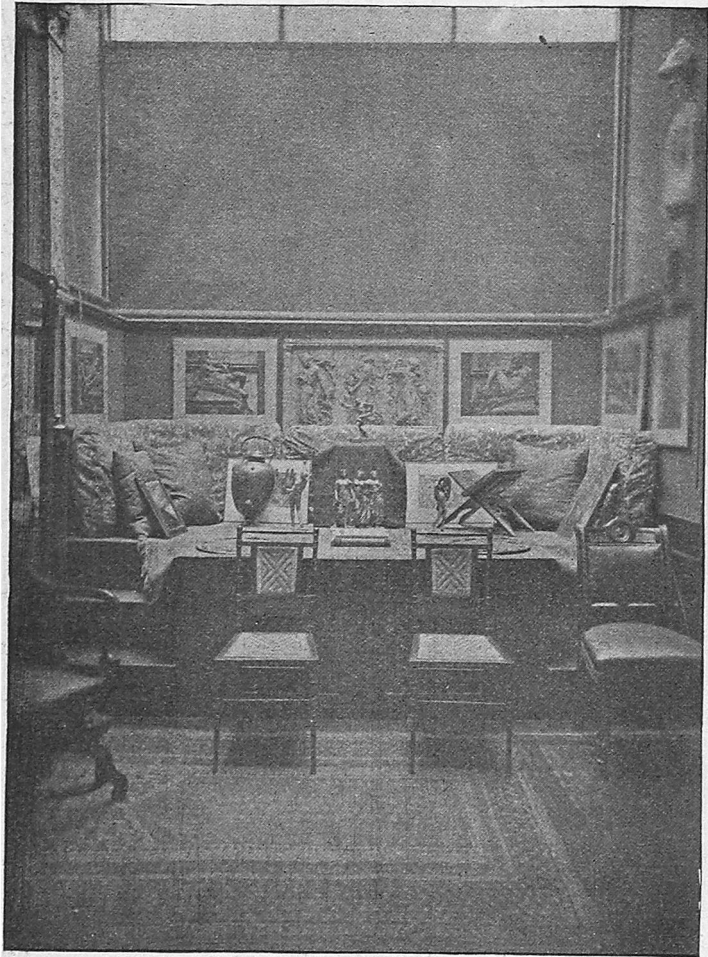
the tiles are of a different design, and are broken by a niche in the wall, on which stands a beautiful Persian jar, showing that exact shade of blue which marks the work of old painters.

Opposite the entrance is a recess, with a dais and soft divan; this answers to the divan in Egyptian homes, and here sit the host and guest of honor. The idea of the wall cupboard, where pipe and tobacco are kept, is carried out by a cabinet set in the wall, studded with tenth-century tile, and finished with doors of mushrabieh. This contains a collection of Persian jars.

The upper part of the recess above the cabinet is occupied by a band of tiles representing a park, with lakes and men fishing. Above this is a Walter Crane frieze, executed on a gold ground, and running all around the hall.

Over the archway through which we enter there is a long inscription from the Koran, done in blue and white: "Name of God, be merciful: merciful God created man and gave him speech and taught him the Koran. Sun and moon and stars worship Him, and trees testify to Him."

There are cushioned seats in the recesses on either side of the room, shut in by low doors or gates of mushrabieh work; the Cairene latticed windows are fitted outside with stained glass, and in an overhanging one stands the inevitable coarse clay water jar so familiar to travellers in the East. The porous clay admits of ventilation and keeps the water cool.



CORNER OF THE LATE SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON'S STUDIO.

A Koran stand, with the "blessed Book" open for reading, rests upon an Oriental prayer rug. There is a dignity and solemnity about this room indicative of the repose of the East. It is a quiet spot, with a "dim religious light," where one might expect to find rest for wearied body and perturbed soul. The stateliness of all the arrangements, the musical play of the fountain and the harmonious blending of colors is something seen nowhere but in the Orient, and none but one who loves the East with his whole soul would have transplanted this beautiful bit of it into smoky, foggy London. It is the most delightful outward and visible manifestation of inward taste and fancy imaginable.

While the remainder of the house is most beautiful and

artistic, there is no flavor of the Orient about it. The dining-room opens out of the passage at the foot of the stairs; the tone of this is dark, naturally, but the outlook through a big bow-window into a lovely garden prevents it from being in any degree sombre. Persian tiles surround the fireplace; Satsuma plates, Venetian glass and old plaques and pictures adorn the walls.

The drawing-room is lighted by a window opposite the door built above a low fireplace, which is apparently never used. On one side of the room the wall between the door and window is broken by a recess and another window; set in the ceiling of this recess and deeply bordered with gold is Delacroix's study for one of the ceilings in the Palais Royal.

On either side of the alcove are four panels painted by Corot for Deschamps, representing the four seasons of the day; night and evening hang at the end next the window, while morning and noon are near the door. Every inch of available space is filled with paintings from the brush of the most celebrated artists.

The library is a room to delight the soul of a dreamy student; it abounds in easy-chairs and cushioned resting-places, while books and pictures are everywhere. Here we find our favorite authors, clothed in the most artistic bindings, and presenting so inviting an appearance that it is with difficulty we tear ourselves away and return to the unartistic, un-Oriental surroundings which make up our ordinary, every-day life. The flavor of this bit of the East remains with us many a day, and helps to comfort us for having to exchange the sun and warmth of Cairo for the dust and smoke of London.

THE SEASON'S LINENS.

THIS is the season of the year when the housewife interested in the adornment of her table will find the very newest styles in napery, and in making her annual tour through the linen stores will observe many new and decorative designs to add to her household equipment. A new *fleur-de-lis* design of a table cloth in the "Empire" style is worthy of notice. On a smooth damask surface are woven miniature *fleur-de-lis* forming a narrow panel a yard wide through the centre of the cloth. Bordering this are larger designs of the same character. The portion of the cloth which falls below the board is decorated with festoons of flowers in a pattern describing deep scallops. The cost of such a table cloth is \$16, the napkins to match \$3 per dozen.

The linens are to be found in complete sets, consisting of breakfast, luncheon and dinner cloths, with napkins in three sizes; and the most elegant ones have fringed doilies for finger bowls and bread plates, in which the same designs are repeated.

What may be considered the newest pattern of the season has a graceful plume scattered irregularly over the plain damask cloth, the border of which is that of Prince of Wales feathers arranged in a garland. This design is unique and merits popular approval because of the novelty and elegance of the design. New scroll weaves resemble undulating waves having a panel through the centre. The Grecian border accentuates the idea of this odd conception and is consistently artistic.

An exceedingly pretty dinner set comes in a bow-knot design, adhering strictly to the panel scheme which characterizes the most exclusive styles of napery. Its beauty is further enhanced by the effective construction of the border, this being a continuous vine of large bow-knots caught at the corners by a ribbon band tied with loops and long ends.

Round and oblong cloths with circular borders come in various sizes for dining tables so shaped. Floral designs predominate largely in these, the clover leaf, pansy and chrysanthemum taking the lead as the favorites. The handsomest ones, however, of this kind are of plain linen, known as butcher's linen, these being decorated by a three-inch insertion of Renaissance lace and a hemstitched strip and edging corresponding in design with the lace. Others are tastefully decorated with bands of Cluny lace in linen, alternating in Mexican drawn work in fanciful design.